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RR RUEHDBU RUEHLN RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHEK #1428/01 2840304
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R 110304Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8287
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1733
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 1239
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0317
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2143
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1530
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001428

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KCRM](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ INTERIOR MINISTER APPOINTED SNB CHAIRMAN,
COMMENTS ON CURRENT CRIME SITUATION

Ref: A. Bishkek 1316

[1](#)B. Bishkek 701

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[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 6, Kyrgyzstan's Interior Minister, Major-General Murat Sutalinov, was named to be the new Chairman of the National Security Service (SNB). Osmonaly Gurunov, Head of MVD's Department for Combating Extremism and Illegal Migration, was named to be the new Interior Minister. Two days prior to his new appointment, Sutalinov gave a remarkable interview to a local newspaper, in which he almost seemed to praise Kyrgyzstan's new crime boss for bringing order to the criminal world, while at the same time warning that the MVD was determined to fight crime in all its manifestations, from organized crime to corrupt officials. He said he thought the time of "unbridled" criminal activity was over, and that the situation would be improving. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) On October 6, President Bakiyev appointed Interior Minister Major-General Murat Sutalinov to be the new Chairman of the SNB. He replaces Busurmankul Tabaldiyev, who resigned as SNB Chair September 12 in the fall-out from the "Matryoshkagate" scandal (Ref A). A career police official, Sutalinov had been Interior Minister since May [1](#)2005. Bakiyev appointed Osmonaly Gurunov, Head of the Department for Combating Extremism and Illegal Migration, as the Acting Interior Minister, pending confirmation as Minister by the Parliament.

[1](#)3. (SBU) On October 4, two days prior to his new appointment, Sutalinov gave a wide-ranging interview to "Delo No." newspaper, in which he discussed the situation with organized crime in the country following the assassination last May of notorious mob boss (and parliamentary candidate) Ryspek Akmatbayev (Ref B) and the

rise of a new criminal leader, Kamchy Kolbayev. Sutalinov shared interesting insights into the hierarchy of the criminal world. Ryspek, although a "reputable" criminal figure, had not been given the honorary title of "Thief-in-Law" (essentially, the "Don") by his fellow criminals, and thus was not bound by the Mob's "Code." Sutalinov described a phenomenon that he called "Ryspekophobia," in which businessmen, who put up with Ryspek's racket for years, now believe out of fear that they should "cooperate" with new criminal leaders because they will provide "protection" to businesses. Since it is practically impossible to run business honestly in Kyrgyzstan, no businessman feels safe without such protection.

14. (SBU) In contrast to Ryspek, new crime boss Kamchy accepted the title of "Thief-in-Law" at a July meeting of Kyrgyz criminals, and thus must abide by certain criminal rules: he cannot participate in political activities; he must ensure that criminals do not do anything outrageous, such as attacking a law enforcement officer; and he can run rackets only against those who violate laws themselves. Sutalinov said that when the news about Kamchy's "coronation" as Thief-in-Law came out, he predicted that the situation in the criminal world would become more stable, as the criminals themselves established "order within the criminal world." Sutalinov noted (not without satisfaction) that his prediction was coming true: within the last few months, the number of contracted crimes in the Chui Valley (surrounding Bishkek) had declined significantly, and he expected the trend to continue.

15. (SBU) Despite Sutalinov's seemingly admiring attitude toward the new order within the criminal world, he said the MVD was determined to fight crime in all its manifestations -- robbers, a thief-in-law and his people, corrupt officials, or religious extremists. In the interview,

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Sutalinov warned Kamchy and other criminals: "Know your place, and do not bother law-abiding businessmen." He also told law enforcement officers to get over their own "Ryspekophobia," as there are no "untouchable" criminals any more, and there are no criminals that enjoy protection from high-level officials. Sutalinov called on businessmen to respect law, not to cooperate with racketeers, and to report racketeering attempts to police, or, if they do not have confidence in the police, to the SNB or prosecutor's office.

16. (SBU) Sutalinov lamented that organized crime, in one form or another, "exists in all countries." He noted that even in "most powerful state -- the United States," many prominent businessmen have criminal background, many trade unions work under the mob's oversight, and the weapons and drugs trade and trafficking in persons are "flourishing." Thus, Sutalinov said, "it is impossible to win the battle over the criminal world, but it is possible to force it to live in its own cell, without interfering in the lives of normal people." Sutalinov said he believes that the time of unbridled crime is over and the crime situation will be improving.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: The 43-year-old Sutalinov, by his words and actions, has challenged conventional perceptions of how government officials act. His observations about the criminal situation are worth noting, however, as numerous interlocutors tell us that criminal activity continues to be a serious threat throughout the country. END COMMENT.